India

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NOTES AND NEWS.

THE latest famine telegram from the Viceroy (June 28) reports fully half a million of persons on relief (531,000 on June 22). This makes an increase of no fewer than 25,000 on the number stated in the preceding telegram (June 20). The increase in Bombay, indeed, is higher than the total increase: it is 30,000. The Bombay Native States stand at the same figure, which we take to mean that there is no fresh enumeration for the week. The balance is reduced by decreases in Haidarabad, the Central India States, and the Central Provinces. One is glad to observe a better state of things anywhere, but the serious fact remains that there is a general increase of distress. Unhappily, we must be prepared for worse accounts. For the Viceroy reports that "except on the coast, the rainfall is light and scattered, and generally insufficient for the purpose of agriculture," and that meantime the numbers on relief in Bombay "may be expected to rise till heavy and good general rainfall enables the people to commence cultivation and sowing." At the same time "prices have risen in the Deccan districts," though—and this, observe, comes in by way of deprecatory mitigation—they "are not yet so high as in the famine of 1899-1900." And the famine is, in some quarters at least, supposed to be over!

Unanimity is not a thing often seen in Indian politics, but upon one point at least all independent observers appear to be agreed—namely, that special enquiry should precede any measures which have a bearing upon the position of the rayat. This point was brought out very clearly in Mr. Thorburn's excellent paper, and the discussion upon it last week, and we find it urged by the Indian members of the Bombay Legislative Council in the recent discussion on the Bill to amend the Land Revenue Code. Mr. Gokhale said:—

> The proper course for Government to adopt is, I venture to submit, to defer this kind of legislation until a careful and comprehensive enquiry has been instituted into the whole Land Revenue problem—the pressure of assessments, the extent of the indebtedness of agriculturists, the extent to which lands have gone out of their possession, the causes of relinquishments and forfeitures, the effects of the rigidity of the State demand, and the general condition, needs, and resources of the agriculturists.

It is of course no answer to say that there have been other enquiries. The relevance of an enquiry depends mainly upon the special purpose for which it is undertaken.

We give elsewhere a further series of "Opinions of the Press" upon the Indian Famine Union. It will be seen that for the most part they are both well-informed and friendly. The remarks of Mr. J. D. Rees in the "Empire Review" appear to be well-intentioned, but he is rather prone to wish everybody, as Mr. Courtney said at the meeting of the East India Association the other day, to tread upon the tail of his coat. It seems to grieve Mr. Rees that the Famine Union does not accuse the Indian Government of insincerity, and if somebody says something at Camberwell which he dissents from he is pained that the same speaker should say something else at Westminster with which he agrees. But we must not treat too seriously a writer whose language suggests that appreciation of good work done in the relief of famine ought to imply a particular view of the causes of famine. Of course we do not know how Mr. Rees's observations may strike the Famine Union. But he may perhaps be reminded that there is an official party spirit as well as a political party spirit which it is eminently desirable to avoid.

We had hoped to give this week a collection of "Opinions of the Press" upon Mr. Thorburn's paper, "Agricola Redivivus." But space again forbids. Let us pick out a point or two. The "Morning Post" (June 25) wrote:—

> In the discussion which followed the paper, and in which a number of distinguished Indian administrators took part, there was a decided difference of opinion as to the wisdom of adopting in Bengal and Madras measures such as have become law for the Deccan and the Punjab. . . . . Mr. Thorburn's reply was to the effect that in no district can the true state of the peasantry as regards debt and freedom from the power of the money-lender be known without an exact enquiry such as was made in the Punjab.

The "Morning Leader" of the same date said:—

> Checks upon money-lenders are good and moderate assessments are good. But do not all discussions about economic difficulties in India bring us back at last to the root evil—the annual tribute of 30 or 40 millions to this country to pay part of the cost of an alien Government which is without doubt a stupendous and admirable fabric, but, under existing methods, a greater burden than the indigent taxpayers of India can bear?

Sir William Wedderburn, who is now in London engaged upon work connected with the Indian Famine Union, was, we regret to state, prevented by the death of his sister from attending the meeting of the East India Association at which Mr. Thorburn read his paper "Agricola Redivivus" last week. Sir William had intended to be present and to speak at the meeting.

That constant difficulty, want of space, compels us to hold over to a future occasion the remarks of the British Press upon the Report on Moral and Material Progress which was issued on Saturday last, and is noticed on another page. The "Daily News" concluded a vigorous article as follows:—

> The bleeding of India is the standing tragedy of our Empire, and while that goes on it is hypocrisy to issue Blue-books on moral and material progress.

The "Observer" justly complained that the report was "a belated document." But it seems to have given the "Observer" the first intimation of the recent Famine Commission:—

> It is noteworthy (it wrote) that the Government of India have already suggested to the Secretary of State an investigation into the subject of the famine. But the heads of this enquiry seem to be mainly (though not entirely) confined to famine relief, so that there would seem to be still room for the enquiry referred to by us in our last week's issue as emanating from Mr. Courtney and Sir William Wedderburn.

The "Morning Post," in a leading article last Monday on the Blue-book, made the suggestion that "the subject of India, its geography and history" should "occupy a distinct place in all schemes of secondary education in this country." If the instruction were rightly given by the right teachers, it would be most valuable. In the same article—which we would gladly reproduce if we only had room—the writer said "India is a country with an enormous population, most of whom are very poor." This called forth a letter from Mr. H. M. Hyndman, who wrote to the "Morning Post":—

> Your leading article to-day insists strongly on the poverty of India. That poverty is so terrible that it constitutes the greatest danger to our Empire. Moreover, railways and irrigation works will not of themselves enrich our vast Dependency. Indeed, railways may, and, in fact many of them do now, act as syphons to drain away the wealth of the country to England. Irrigation works, though much more useful, are not everywhere applicable, and, even if they were, could not make up for the economic defects of our administration. The main cause of the poverty of India, as I have contended for a quarter of a century, is the amount of produce which we abstract from her population with-

out any commercial return. Our drain for official purposes alone amounts to close on £20,000,000 a year. If to this we add private remittances, etc., I am sure I do not overstate the case when I say that we have taken £500,000,000 out of India without commercial return during the past twenty years. That alone is enough to account for the poverty of India and for the increasing impoverishment, accompanied by almost permanent famine, which is now such a distressing feature of our rule. Had we left that sum at the disposal of the people or had we ourselves used it for improving their condition we should not have to lament the almost hopeless penury of the agricultural population at the present time.

Mr. Hyndman continued:—

Do not let us forget that this drain has gone on now, in an ever-increasing ratio, over a constantly-widening extent of territory, for more than a hundred years; nor should we neglect in this connexion to take account of the fact that, apart from the drain, a great proportion of the revenue in India itself is spent on paying foreigners to do work which, however well it may be done, costs too much for the welfare of the Natives. This is not a party question. I almost wish it were, provided that would induce the public to take an interest in it. For I am quite certain we are not far from a terrific economic catastrophe. More than twenty years ago the late Sir Louis Mallet (I presume with the knowledge and consent of Lord Cranbrook, then Secretary of State for India, and of my friend the late Edward Stanhope, then Under-Secretary) put at my disposal the confidential documents in the India Office, from Indian Finance Ministers and others, bearing on this question of the drain from India to England and its effects. The situation is to my mind so desperate that I consider I am entitled to call on Lord George Hamilton to submit the confidential memoranda on this subject, up to and after the year 1880, for the consideration of the House of Commons. I venture to assert that the public will be astonished to read the names of those who (privately) are at one with me on this matter. As to remedy, there is but one, and it is almost too late for that: the stanching of the drain and the steady substitution of Native rule, under light English supervision, for our present ruinous system.

A forcible article on the foreign trade of India appears in the current issue of the "Investors' Review" (June 29). We should have been glad if we could have found space to reproduce it in full. The writer examines the excess of exports over imports for the past three years, assessing it at £45,000,000; and he assumes that the burden borne by India on account of her alien Government and private charges amounted "to £90,000,000 in the three years." On this he says:—

But the whole of such money was not thus (i.e. out of the net excess of exports) available, so that the true position was uglier than the figures reveal; and the interesting point to which we always return is: by what means does India maintain an appearance of solvency in spite of the steady and unrelenting drain upon her resources—a drain which tends to grow as the years pass? To a great extent the relief must come through the raising of loans in the London market, and through the subscription of fresh capital issues for English joint-stock enterprises in the peninsula. The total of these, however, for the past three years could hardly have amounted to £45,000,000, and there must consequently be a shortage—a gap—of greater or less amount which the Government of India has in some way to finance.

Of course, everything depends on the estimate of £90,000,000, and we do not know the full and precise facts on which it is based, and in any case the estimate must be largely speculative. Anyhow, the writer concludes: "On the past three years' trading, at a moderate estimate, we fear India failed to pay her way abroad, all debts and capital raisings counted off against current liabilities, by at least £25,000,000." This is truly an ominous computation, and one is not surprised that the writer "does not see how it is possible for the Government of India much longer to escape serious embarrassment."

Mr. L. C. Innes, formerly one of the Judges of the High Court of Madras, writes in the current (July) number of the "Asiatic Quarterly" to recommend Reafforestation as a means of prevention of famine—not as a panacea, but as a device that "should certainly occupy a prominent place." It is more than forty years since Mr. Innes publicly urged attention to this remedy. We have ourselves again and again mentioned it. Mr. Innes cites copiously from the writings of historians, travellers, naturalists, meteorologists, conservators of forests, etc., to show the effects of the presence or the absence of plenty of wood in a country. Of course he finds "the coincidence of heavy and constant rainfalls with dense forests, or with plain regions hemmed in by dense forests," and thinks that "hence we may reasonably conclude that the presence of dense forests is favourable to the precipitation of rain, and that the rainfall would be less where forests from whatever cause were absent." Besides, where the surface has no such clothing, "the water rapidly runs off into streams and seas by sudden floods and freshets." The absence of forests means in the first place the absence of a cooling vegetable covering of the ground capable of arresting and drawing down the moisture brought by the monsoon; and in the second place the absence of the means of retaining such moisture as happens to be attracted to the earth. So, after all, it seems foolish to blame the monsoon. The monsoon comes, offering all its beneficence; but it is for the local atmospheric conditions to take advantage of it or let it pass on its way. The authorities helplessly say they cannot control the monsoon. The forest reports on their dusty shelves show most clearly that to some extent they can if they choose.

The Forest Department has done, and is doing, very important work no doubt. But its operations seem to be almost wholly confined to the care of existing forests, and not to extend to the development of plantations on areas that are now bare. Mr. Innes "arrives at the final conclusion that the extension of forest areas in India would prevent drought, and that a system of extensive replanting ought to be undertaken." For several years there would be plenty of scope for planting on uncultivable and uncultivated areas; but, says Mr. Innes, "granting that this replanting might trench somewhat on the cultivable area, yet it would eventually add to the fertility of India, and increase its wealth, and by the accumulation of capital give rise to various industries which the country is at present too poor to maintain, and thus provide for that portion of the population for whom cultivation of the soil might no longer afford an available means of livelihood." But the root difficulty is, as usual, the expense. The money that might reclothe India in rich vesture has been thrown away in unproductive military adventures beyond the frontier; and the present is not a time that suggests the advantage of further loans. "Is any immediate outlay too great," asks Mr. Innes, "that would enable us once for all to stay the approaches of drought and famine, save millions of lives, and place our finances upon a basis no longer liable to be disturbed, as at present they are, by constant apprehensions of the recurrence of these calamities?" Yes, but what of the constant apprehension of outbursts of military zeal, whenever there is money in the treasury? But might not an immense deal be done by private enterprise under Government instruction and with Government encouragement and aid within very modest limits?

Elsewhere will be found a report of the valuable address delivered by Mr. Romesh Dutt last Friday evening upon the causes and the remedies of famine in India. The address was delivered to the Fabian Society, and gave rise to an important discussion.

An article entitled "The Land and the people in Bombay," which appears in the "Pioneer," and deals with the Bombay Revenue Bill, shows clearly how the principal clause of that Bill violates for good or ill all the traditions of that Province. Sir William Hunter declared that "in its simplicity of principle and in its minute conscientiousness of detail the Bombay settlement system ranks among the triumphs of British administration in India." And now it is said that this triumph, if not a complete failure, at least requires alteration in a vital point. As Sir William Hunter said: "As long as the occupant paid his rent or revenue, he owned his holding. He could sell it, bequeath it, mortgage it." Now this right of alienation is to be withdrawn. It is an unfortunate admission of error, which in future may cause some scepticism when the "triumphs" of our government in India are proclaimed.

Sir William Hunter, indeed, foresaw the failure of the Bombay system, and attributed it to the extravagance of the peasants of the Deccan in marriage festivities, etc., etc. Mr. Gokhale on the contrary considers the indebtedness of the Deccan peasantry to be mainly due to two causes, Mr. Pringle's settlement and the facilities given by our Government to the money-lending class in the recovery of debts. "The evil of the wrong start given by Mr. Pringle's settlement to the peasantry was aggravated by the action of the civil courts." The "Pioneer" is of opinion that

the causes indicated by Sir William Hunter and those indicated by Mr. Gokhale have been at work simultaneously. Even the officials do not insist that the Government has been entirely blameless. Mr. Monteath said in the Bombay Council: "We do not contend that the Survey Department has made no mistakes. The "Pioneer" adds: "No official authority has ever attempted to deny that Pringle's settlement was oppressive," but it claims that, while made early in the century, it only extended over a comparatively small area. Still, it is important to have got such admissions as these from Mr. Monteath and the "Pioneer."

The "reformed" municipality of Calcutta still fails, and that more and more, to satisfy its parents and sponsors. "Everyone," we are told by the "Englishman," "appears to be agreed that the condition of municipal affairs could hardly be more unsatisfactory than it is." Further, it is said that "faulty organisation, loose supervision, and bad administration" make "the name of the Corporation a by-word for delay, incompetence, and failure." Our contemporary has now some hope that the recommendations of the sub-committee on the reorganisation of the Engineering and Health Departments will set matters right. But it is not sure. The sub-committee ought to work wonders, for of the six members only one has an Indian name. Yet the "Englishman" hesitates.

Lord George Hamilton, in his speech at Kensington on May 22 last, is reported to have said that "on no occasion had the House of Commons reversed a decision of the Indian Government." A Bombay correspondent points out that Lord George apparently forgot the repeal of Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press or "Black" Act by the Gladstone Administration of 1880.

The "Times" article on Indian Education, to which we referred last week, has drawn a letter of comment from Bishop Welldon, who is recuperating at Eastbourne. The article, the Bishop thinks, "will be welcomed with a grateful appreciation by many friends of India," for "it touches one of the greatest and gravest problems in the life of the Indian people." Bishop Welldon says the Universities "are ready for reform, and the only sound principle of reform is that the higher educational interests of India should be controlled by persons who know something of education." This criticism seems startling. Is it the fact that hitherto they have been controlled by persons who have not known something of education? And if this be so, why have the authorities allowed it? It is rather surprising that there is "not a single member with either an Oxford or a Cambridge degree" on the Syndicate or Executive body of the University of Calcutta. Still there may be members, for aught we know, with some other degrees. Why is the argument not stated more fairly—or, at any rate, more intelligibly, and with less tendency to mislead? Bishop Welldon himself says that "it is clearly desirable that the Indian Universities should not be organised or administered without some reference to higher education in the Universities of Great Britain." Quite right: but there are other Universities in Great Britain besides Oxford and Cambridge. And, further, is it not the fact that the Indian Universities have been organised and administered during the half century of their existence with reference to one British so-called University in particular—and yet unsatisfactorily?

What, then, would Bishop Welldon have us do? He sets out two conditions as "necessary for the elevation of Indian Universities":—

1. The appointment of a supreme educational authority well acquainted with academical life.
2. The creation in each University of a powerful executive body consisting as far as possible of educational experts.

Now, where is this "supreme educational authority" to be got, and what is it like? The Bishop conceives it as "some man already recognised as an authority upon higher education at home"—an importation, of course, at a high salary. But such a person would presumably be inexperienced in Indian education and in Indian ways. The Bishop, however, would not constitute him at one step: first he would "frame a report upon the present state of the Indian Universities, their constitution, their curriculum, their examinations, and the character and attainment of their students;" then, if his report were approved, he might be empowered to give it effect as Minister of Education. But his enquiry would surely demand an investigation of secondary education, for it is in the secondary schools or colleges that preparation is made for the University examinations. And a Minister of Education, we should fancy, would have his hands pretty full for a time with elementary education. Of course, the Executive ought to be powerful, and it ought to have experts on it; but it is not the British view that experts should predominate, and there are other aspects of the work to be done which require the outside criticism that does experts good. We daresay the Indian Universities—like our own—would be all the better for overhauling. The difficulty is to get independent, instructed, and judicious suggestions of remedy.

Commenting on Lord Curzon's recent speech on temperance, a Bombay correspondent writes:—As usual Lord Curzon was felicitous and diplomatic. His speech was all that could be desired. It would rejoice Exeter Hall. But what of opium and excise? How does the homily accord with the practice of the Government? What of the discreditable phenomenon of a maximum of duty with a maximum of consumption? When is the Government going to modify its excise policy so as to diminish alcoholic consumption which is mounting up by leaps and bounds, and which brings to the zealous excise officials promotion and decoration? It is idle to talk of the mere diminution in the number of liquor shops when the smaller number sells a larger quantity of noxious drinks. How is it that, in spite of the despatch of 1889, local option is kept at arm's length?

The Tibetan mission to Russia very naturally gives rise to speculation, not always disinterested or well-balanced. The "Times" correspondent at Vienna sends a passage from an Austrian journal, reproduced from a South German paper, which represents it as "probably true that the present mission and the exchange of amenities between the Tsar and the Dalai Lama bodes no good to Great Britain." The substance of the matter seems to be this:—

> When France has secured a firm footing in Yun-nan, and Russia in Tibet, the Franco-Russian chain will extend from the Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Tongking, and it will be possible for the two allies to prevent trade between China and the British possessions in Asia. It will also enable them to combine in any eventual operations, either to the north against China or to the south against India.

It is just as well to remember that, though it may be true (or not true) that "the Dual Alliance is working in every possible direction against British interests," there was a mission last autumn as well, when the Lama Derzhieff visited the Tsar in Livadia, and that no particular convulsion is known to have followed it. Our business is to see to it that the speculations of German publicists do not lead our Indian authorities to adventures on the North-east now that the North-west is understood to be closed to military enterprise.

It is stated that when the Indian Budget comes up for consideration in the House of Commons, Sir Edward Sassoon intends to draw attention to the existing unsatisfactory relations between the Indian Government and the owners of private cables and land lines, his object being to demonstrate the unfairness of withholding landing rights from cable companies desiring to compete with firms already in possession.

Remittances on India for 45 lakhs were on Wednesday offered for tender by the India Council, and applications amounting to 35 lakhs were received at 1s. 3⅞d. and 29-32nds. The only amount allotted was Rs. 20,000 in bills on Madras at an average of 1s. 3.906d. Tenders at 1s. 3d. and 29-32nds receive in full. Later the Council sold bills for 5 lakhs on Calcutta and Rs. 1,30,000 on Bombay at 1s. 3d. and 29-32nds. Last week remittances for 16 lakhs were sold for £106,042, making the total sold from April 1 to Tuesday night Rs. 6,52,97,035, producing £4,331,889. Next week the amount to be offered will be reduced to 30 lakhs.

"MORAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS."

THE full title of this annual Blue-book, which was issued last Saturday, is "Statement exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India during the year 1899-1900." Exception may be taken to this familiar title on more grounds than one. The year over a considerable part of the country was one of material retrogression. Bombay, the Central Provinces, and many other districts lay in the grip of famine. Even if we pass this by, and allow that we have before us an account of the material progress of the country, we are still bound to confess that of the moral progress and condition of the country little can here be learned. A few criminal statistics and some information as to the facilities for procuring narcotics and intoxicants hardly justify those who are responsible for this work in professing that it gives an account of the moral progress and condition of India. The book, too, is belated. Nearly the whole of the matter is more than fifteen months old. The results of the last census, indeed, are included; and if their inclusion was possible, why could not other matters of great importance be included also? The third general census of India was taken on March 1 last, nearly a year after the close of the period of which this book claims to treat. If the limits of time could be so advantageously set aside in this case, why not in other cases also?

As a statement of this kind is published annually it is too much to expect novelty in its contents. Nor is there any attempt to probe deep into causes. All apparently that is aimed at is a bald summary of facts. The usefulness of such a compilation depends on its clearness. Ambiguity and confusion may easily render the whole worse than useless. It is still more serious when, under cover of what is professedly a bare statement, the real meaning of facts is concealed or distorted. Such a case meets us at the very outset in the list of the most important legislative measures adopted during the year. The case is that of the Calcutta Municipal Act, the scope and purpose of which are set out at greater length than are those of any other Act passed during the same period. We are told

> this important measure aims at removing defects in the municipal administration of Calcutta, the most conspicuous of which were the unsatisfactory state of the tax collections, the bad sanitary supervision, and the uncertainty and lack of system in the local administrative authority. The present Act follows more or less the lines of the City of Bombay Municipal Act, and its main object is the establishment of effective municipal government. It abandons the system, followed in previous Acts, of vesting the entire municipal administration in the Commissioners as a body, and provides for three co-ordinate municipal authorities—the corporation, the general committee, and the chairman.

Antecedently we should have thought it impossible to write so much about the change in the Calcutta Corporation and yet tell so little. Further on, in the next chapter, some details are given which may correct in a few points the erroneous impressions which these sentences are certain to give. As they stand, who would imagine that the effect of the Act was to transfer the municipal control of Calcutta from a body in which the representatives of the ratepayers were in a majority to one in which they are in a minority? Who would think that one of the means by which the promoters of the Act hoped to effect its professed object was the introduction of a greater number of Europeans into the Corporation? Who would believe that in order to bring this about a most startling innovation was included in the Act—the payment of members? It is declared that the new Act "follows more or less the lines" of the Bombay Act. This may be so on paper. But in reality, as regards popular control, this is not so. Among the nominating bodies in Calcutta there is none so popular as the justices in Bombay, whose representatives for the most part constitute a reinforcement of the directly elected part of the Council, and not a virtual addition to the official element. It is difficult to see how anyone's real knowledge of the Calcutta Municipal Act would be added to by a perusal of the description on page 3 of the Blue-book. As to the statement of the aims of the Act, we willingly admit that these were the objects which its promoters had in view. But few will now be found to assert that they have been attained. The "Englishman," a great Anglo-Indian organ, and a strong advocate of the measure when it was under discussion, now declares that "everyone appears to be agreed that the condition of municipal affairs could hardly be more unsatisfactory than it is." Nor is this all. The organisation is faulty, the supervision loose, and the administration bad, and therefore the name of the Corporation has become "a by-word for delay, incompetence, and failure." The Act can therefore hardly be said to have fulfilled the hopes of its supporters. The abuse poured out on the old corporation was mild in comparison with that which its authors lavish on the new.

But the subject to which most readers will turn first, the subject which looms largest for all who take an interest in India and her people, is the terrible subject of famine. In the chapter devoted to famine we certainly find an admission of the plainest and most straightforward kind, which coming as it does in an official publication will be a cruel blow to many of those who have put faith in the explanations and the theories by which official persons have tried to account for the recurrence of this calamity. Two opposing theories have long been face to face. According to the one the famine was not really due to want of food but to want of money wherewith to buy food. Poverty, therefore, was its root. According to another theory famine was due to a failure of the rains. The food was not to be had; and the previous condition of the people was of little importance. It was a visitation of God. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that the Blue-book speaks with no uncertain voice in support of the former theory. Here is what it says:—

> In no case, save perhaps for a short time in a remote hill tract of Rajputana, did the food supply actually run short. Throughout the famine area food from the surplus provinces was distributed by railway; but prices were double to quadruple the normal price, and were beyond the means of the ordinary peasants or labourers who could get no income and no wages in their fields.

In other words, there was sufficient food to be obtained, but not a sufficiency of money to obtain it. Even in fat years the peasants are so close to the margin of subsistence that in lean years they are at once driven to want.

While we are on the subject of famine, it may not be out of place to remark on the strange silence about the question of a National Grant, which in spite of the great place it held both in the hopes of India and in the Indian debate in the House of Commons is here passed over without mention. Nor is it quite obvious from what source the epithets are derived in the statement that a small Famine Commission was appointed in the latter part of 1898 with a view to an "informal" and "expeditious" enquiry into four points. These points, except perhaps the last on the variation of the death-rate, related only to famine relief. Everything that we have since learnt of the famine, including what appears in the pages of this book, points to the need of a far more searching enquiry. There are many other subjects the treatment of which in the Blue-book it would be interesting to discuss. But it is necessary to make a selection; and naturally we turn to the chapter dealing with justice and police. The remarkable consensus of opinion on the evil state of the police and the need of reform would alone be a sufficient reason for this preference. But those who look for information on the subject will assuredly be disappointed. Of measures of reform nothing is said; of police scandals but little. We are indeed told that in the North-west Provinces and Oudh the number of penalties inflicted on members of the district police rose from 936 to 984, and that there were eight charges of torture by the police, three ending in conviction and five in acquittal. On the other hand in Madras and Bengal fewer punishments were inflicted. In Bengal there were nine charges of torture, and 63 of extortion brought against policemen, but only two of the former and nine of the latter resulted in conviction. If there is little about police reform and police scandals, there is nothing about judicial scandals, and the separation of the executive and judicial powers. The Chupra case is passed over, and the weighty memorial signed by men who were an honour to the Indian Bench is not even mentioned. In fact in this chapter we read nothing about progress except in so far as it may be deduced from statistics. Of progress in its higher forms nothing is said. On the whole we think this Blue-book would be improved if it had a more modest title and a more ambitious scope.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

Once more the Liberal party is in the throes of a crisis. Great events, says the poet, from little causes spring, and it may be that the dinner party to which Mr. Asquith insists on going will witness the inauguration of a schism second only in importance to the historic secession of 1886. What the disturbance is all about the average man must find it difficult to imagine. Lord Salisbury's theory that the management of a party majority is largely a question of gastronomics would seem to apply also to the mismanagement of a party minority, for the history of the Liberal split is a narrative of inharmonious festivity. Some weeks ago Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman went to a dinner and made a speech that Mr. Asquith did not like, whereupon Mr. Asquith retaliated by going to a dinner and making a speech that was intended to displease Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman. Apparently, however, this second banquet fell short of expectation. At all events, a third feast was at once organised, and almost before Mr. Asquith himself knew what was in the wind his friends had advertised to the world their bold intention of celebrating Dinner Number 2 by Dinner Number 3.

Opinions differ as to the wisdom of the Liberal leader in interpreting this somewhat farcical proceeding as a defiance of his authority. Mr. Asquith, in response to remonstrances from a considerable number of influential Liberals, made an effort to disarm criticism by explaining that his purpose in accepting the invitation of his friends was not to emphasise the dissensions of the party, but to formulate a policy which should be a preferable and practicable alternative to that of the Government. Thereupon he was met with the retort that that was the business of the recognised leader of the party, and not of one of his lieutenants, however gifted. Probably, the cause of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's determination to treat the question as one of confidence in himself is to be traced to this calm assumption of authority by Mr. Asquith. The latter had omitted to consult the Liberal Whips or any of his colleagues before deciding to commit the party to an "alternative" policy, and in that circumstance rather than in the speech at the Essex dinner lies his offence against discipline. If the truth were known, however, it would doubtless be found that the real culprits were Mr. Asquith's indiscreet friends, among whom are at least two of the most embittered wreckers who ever strove to ruin a great political cause.

According to the best information available at the moment, it seems probable that Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman will emerge from the ordeal with flying colours. He has undoubtedly the bulk of the party with him, and is supported also by the sympathy of a number of Liberal Imperialists who resent the tactics of some of the wirepullers of that section. A meeting of the party is to be held at the Reform Club next Tuesday, at which Mr. John Morley and Sir William Harcourt, as well as Mr. Asquith and Sir Henry Fowler are expected to be present. On the issue of the gathering depends the immediate future of our political history.

Another great debate on the Navy is promised for tomorrow night. Those great debates never come to anything. Some weeks ago we had a great debate on the Army, the upshot of which was that a scheme of military reorganisation condemned by every independent critic and by the general sense of Parliament received the assent of the House of Commons by an overwhelming majority. The same thing happened the other day, in the House of Lords. A resolution condemning the scheme was proposed by the Duke of Bedford. Every noble lord who took part in the discussion, apart from members of the Government, pointed to blemishes, imperfections, and downright absurdities in Mr. Brodrick's New Model. Their denunciations occupied two nights, and then, at the end of it all, the Duke of Bedford meekly withdrew his resolution of censure, and the peers went home contentedly to dinner. Comedy will repeat itself when the Navy comes to be discussed. The Service members, of course, are approaching the subject with a noble determination to put patriotism before party, but in the end they will vote "just as their leaders tell 'em to."

Liberals, for once, promise to be united in their hostility to the new Education Bill which was introduced last Tuesday by Sir John Gorst. The object of the measure is to bring the School Boards under the suzerainty of the borough and county councils. In its original form there was a pretty coating on the pill, but Mr. Balfour realising that it would be necessary in any event to resort to compulsion has stripped the gilt away in the hope that by making the dose compact he might the more easily force the patient to swallow it. A single-clause Bill, he has told his friends, may excite as fierce a spirit of animosity as a Bill of several clauses, but it offers a smaller surface for attack and may, therefore, be expected to run the gauntlet more expeditiously. As the Government have suffered a humiliation in having to abandon the larger bill, they will doubtless strain every effort to rehabilitate themselves by forcing this one through. But it is a purpose that they can only hope to accomplish with the aid of the closure.

Curiously enough, one member of the Government has just disclosed an invincible repugnance to the closure. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, tired of Sir William Harcourt's boast that the great Death Duties Budget was passed without a single attempt to curtail debate, resolved that he too would carry a Budget through committee without the assistance of Mr. Balfour's favourite instrument. Sir Michael has been as good as his vow. There was a trying moment some nights ago when both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain were at his elbow urging him to abandon the quixotic notion. Our financial St. Anthony, however, was proof against temptation, and now he has added a feather to his cap. But what will Mr. Balfour think when, as is certain to happen, he finds the example of his chivalrous colleague cited as a contrast with his own indiscriminate use of the closure? Sir Michael is putting a rod in pickle for Mr. Balfour's back, which the Opposition will produce in due time.

Lovers of the picturesque are looking forward with eager curiosity to the pending trial of Lord Russell by his peers. Doubtless, also, they are consumed by a secret chagrin at the somewhat ordinary character of the offence with which the defendant is charged. The last peer who came before this stately tribunal was a duellist. His laches and his environment, to quote Tony Lumpkin's expression, were "in a concatenation accordingly." But there is something incongruous in the association of the antique forms of the House of Lords with the terminology of the Old Bailey. From the sentimental point of view one could wish that peers should only be tried by peers for such high and romantic misdemeanours as doffing the hat to the statue of Charles I., or celebrating the birthday, with Royal honours, of Mary of Modena.

Here is an interesting letter, especially interesting in its bearing on the present political situation, written nearly twenty-five years ago by the late Matthew Arnold to his wife, whose death has just been recorded after a widowhood of thirteen years. "Everybody is in a great way about Monday," wrote the essayist, "and they are in consternation at the Reform Club, I hear, because while most of the Liberal party want to go with Lubbock and Lord Hartington, the Liberal constituencies are pouring letters and telegrams on their members desiring them to vote with Gladstone. Chamberlain is organising the thing with the hope no doubt of winning over Gladstone for future purposes; and he is a great and successful organiser. I cannot say I much regret to see the Liberal party in a state of chaos, but I am sincerely sorry that a charlatan like Dizzy should be Premier just now." Once again, "they are in consternation at the Reform Club." But the chaos of 1877 crystallised into the victory of 1880. Will history repeat itself?

"INDIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY."

TO THE EDITOR OF "INDIA."

SIR,—My attention has been drawn by my publishers, Messrs. Marshall and Son, to a letter signed "William Digby" in your paper of 21st inst.

The aggressive discourtesy of the writer would, I feel sure, in the opinion of any impartial person absolve me from taking any notice of it.

The statements which he traverses in my book on "India in the Nineteenth Century" are based so far as they relate to facts on the official reports of the Government of India, and they are correct.

Mr. Digby should have read the whole of the paragraph in which the reference to wheat and cotton occurs. He will find it clearly stated on page 327 that I am speaking explicitly of "the development and expansion of India's general trade." This would have saved a good deal of your space.

With regard to what I say about wheat and cotton, I confine myself in supporting my statement to quotations from the "Imperial Gazetteer" of the late Sir W. W. Hunter, who used language practically identical with my own.

"The abolition in 1873 of the old Indian export duty on wheat laid the foundation of the Indo-European wheat trade which since this wise measure has attained to large dimensions."—"Imp. Gaz.," Vol. 6, p. 488.

Again—

"In 1874-5 the export of wheat was about one million cwts. Forthwith it increased year by year until in 1877-8 it exceeded 6¼ million cwts. In 1878-9 it fell to one million cwts. owing to the general failure of the harvest in the producing districts. . . . . Since 1877-8 the wheat export has rapidly extended, and in the year 1882-3 it stood at 14,193,763 cwts."—"Imp. Gaz.," Vol. 6, p. 573.

Next with regard to cotton—

"The present importance of the crop dates from the crisis in Lancashire caused by the American War. Prior to 1860 the exports of raw cotton from India used to average less than 3 millions sterling a year, but after that year they rose by leaps and bounds until in 1866 they reached the enormous total of 37 millions."—"Imp. Gaz.," Vol. 6, p. 491.

My statements are, therefore, in accord with those of the late Sir W. W. Hunter in the standard book of reference relating to India, as your readers can judge for themselves from these extracts.

I come now to the more serious point of the increase in the area under cultivation. My statement is that "the area under cultivation has doubled in forty years"; it is not merely correct, but it is under the truth.

Mr. Digby gives the figures for the years 1880 and 1897-8 as follows:—

In 1897-8	- -	196,497,232 ACRES
In 1880	- -	182,750,000 ,,
Increase	-	13,747,232 ACRES

and then by an ingeniously constructed table of his own device he proceeds to declare that I would represent the area under cultivation in 1900 to be 335,000,000 acres.

Mr. Digby through a double error has raised a house of cards which I will now demolish.

The area under cultivation in 1880-1 was not 182,750,000 acres, but only 142,100,480. Mr. Digby makes a trifling exaggeration to the extent of forty million acres.

My figures for 1880-1 are taken from Hunter, viz., 222,032 square miles, which represent 142,100,480 acres. But to prevent all possibility of misconception I add from the Moral and Material Progress Reports of 1882-3, and 1884-5 the figures for those years. They are 134,257,852 and 144,981,220 respectively, and they will show that Mr. Digby's figures for 1880 are forty millions (approximately) in excess of the truth.

His offence does not stop here; he has committed a greater error on the other side. He has omitted from the returns of 1897-8 the Current Fallows of over 40 million acres.

The true increase since 1880-1 is therefore as follows:—

		TOTAL AREA UNDER CULTIVATION.
Year 1898-9—Under crops - -	196,487,658	
Current fallows - -	41,200,719	
		237,688,377
Year 1880-1—(The old form of statistics before 1884 did not distinguish current fallows)		142,100,480
Increase		95,587,897

The increase which Mr. Digby represented at 13,747,232 was really 95,587,897 acres, or one of over 66 per cent. in 18 years. There is little doubt that the increase between 1858 and 1880 was still greater in proportion.

A gentleman who adds forty millions to one side and ignores another forty millions on the other to support his argument is not one to stick at a trifle.

I feel that I can treat criticism from such a quarter with indifference and disdain.

For some of the twenty-five years during which I have been writing prominently on Indian topics I have known Mr. Digby by repute as a fanatic. His letter on my book is the latest sample of his ravings.—Yours, etc.,

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER.

June 26, 1901.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

531,000 ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy, dated June 28:—

"Famine.—The numbers demanding relief have continued to increase in Bombay, and may be expected to rise till heavy and good general rainfall enables the people to commence cultivation and sowing. Except on the coast rainfall light and scattered, and generally insufficient for the purpose of agriculture. Prices risen in the Deccan districts, but are not yet so high as in the famine of 1899-1900. Of headquarters of districts grain is dearest at Ahmednagar, where price is eleven seers per rupee. Highest price anywhere else is 10 seers per rupee. The health and condition of the people are fairly good and exhibit no marked deterioration. Number of persons in receipt of relief on June 22:—Bombay, 430,000; Bombay Native States, 46,000; Baroda, 30,000; Hyderabad, 18,000; Madras, 5,000; Central India States, 1,000; Central Provinces, 1,000; total, 531,000."

The following telegram from the Viceroy is dated June 20:—North-west monsoon has not burst, but heavy rain has fallen at Bijapur and Sholapur, and preparations for monsoon crops progressing generally in Bombay. No material change in prices.

Number of persons in receipt of relief: Bombay, 400,000; Bombay Native States, 46,000; Baroda, 29,000; Hyderabad, 19,000; Central India States, 4,000; Madras, 5,000; Central Provinces, 3,000; total, 506,000.

A Reuter telegram from Simla, dated June 20, said:—The number of persons obtaining relief on account of the famine continues to increase every week. There has been an increase of 14,000 this week, bringing the total up to 519,926. It costs the Government one rupee to feed ten men for one day.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

The "Investors' Review" writes (June 29):—

Have we missed seeing the Viceroy's famine telegram this week, or has his Excellency been too busy touting among Native Princes for subscriptions to his Walhalla fund to find time to attend to such trivialities as the starvation of the Indian common people, the cultivators who bear on their emaciated backs all the weight of our Imperial grandeur?

Subscriptions to our little fund, from which not a penny is deducted for advertisement in newspapers or any other kind of charges, may be sent to A. J. Wilson, at this office; cheques to be crossed "Union Bank of London, Indian Famine Fund."

		£	s.	d.
Amount acknowledged up to date	- - -	£954	3	4
James Skinner, Esq., Camberwell New Road, S.E.		0	10	0
Total to date	- - - -	£954	13	4

THE INDIAN FAMINE UNION.

SUPPORT FROM THE PRESS.

We mentioned a fortnight ago various journals that had given publicity to the letter signed by Mr. Courtney and others, and dated June 14, which described the objects of the Indian Famine Union. The following journals may be added to the list, which, however, does not profess to be complete:—The "Liverpool Daily Post," the "Investors' Review," the "Glasgow Evening Times," the "Nottingham Guardian," the "Western Daily Press," the "Newcastle Daily Leader," the "Yorkshire Herald," the "British Times," the "St. James's Gazette," the "North Star," and the "Pilot."

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE "LIVERPOOL DAILY POST."

The Indian Famine Union has sprung from a desire to obtain more extensive and more accurate information than is available as to the causes of Indian famines. It was pointed out by several speakers that for drought there was in the physical conditions of India no means of prevention, but that famine was preventible if the people had the money to buy food. It is possible that by afforestation drought itself may be diminished, but at any rate the means of conveying food by rail and water have so improved that if the buying power of the people is sufficient they need not starve. What is proposed is to obtain the consent of the Government to an enquiry into the social conditions of selected villages in each of the provinces which have been affected by recent famines. It is not an enquiry that is likely to result in any speedy improvement in the famine-resisting power of the people, but it will probably bring closer together men of different habits of thought, settle some disputed matters of fact, and give common ground for the discussion of improving the financial condition of the cultivator and his many dependents. It has strangely and cruelly happened that the security enjoyed by the cultivator under British law by improving his credit has actually led to his impoverishment. In many districts the land is passing, or has already passed, from the cultivator to the money-lender. The cultivator made use recklessly of his new power of obtaining cash on the credit of his holding, and in the British law courts a bond is a bond, as the cultivator has too often found to his loss and financial ruin. Whether something can be done to remedy this economic evil by the establishment of land-banks, which have proved successful on the Continent, will probably be one of the subjects of enquiry. . . . . It is to be hoped that the Government will grant the enquiry which is desired. It will certainly settle some disputed points, and if it suggests the means of mitigating the awful consequences of famine by improving the circumstances of the people it will remove a blot which disfigures British administration in India as it has disfigured every other Government that has ruled in the country.—(June 18.)

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW."

Nothing but good can come of the movement outlined in the appended letter if citizens of capacity and some amount of leisure can only be induced to give their help. To get at the true causes lying at the root of the ever-recurring and increasingly cruel and disastrous famines of India must be the first step. These known it may be possible to apply a remedy more durable than relief camps and famine doles. It is surely of vital interest to us as the mortgagees of India, to put the case on no higher ground, to know whether we are killing the country or not.—(June 22.)

THE "PILOT."

A very unpretentious, but very useful, scheme was set on foot yesterday week in the shape of a union for investigating the causes of Indian famines. The difference between the famines of to-day and the famines of half a century ago is that whereas formerly they arose from want of food, to-day they spring from want of money. Improved carriage and greater foresight on the part of the Government seem to have put an end to the former cause. When the crops fail there are other crops hoarded or imported waiting to take their place. But with the failure of the crops there now disappears not only the food of the grower, but also his purchasing power. He has nothing to eat and nothing wherewith to buy anything to eat. Sir William Wedderburn, to whom the Indian Famine Union owes its existence, thinks that something might be done to improve the position of the cultivator if the economic condition of certain typical villages were studied, and the real causes of their poverty brought into fuller light. Is it debt, or tenure, or methods of cultivation, or what, that drags him down? The Union cannot indeed carry on the enquiry, since that needs appliances which only the Government can command. But it can press the institution of such an enquiry upon the Government, and so indirectly render valuable help.—(June 15.)

THE "OBSERVER."

The prevention of Indian famines is the object of a new movement, fathered by a number of gentlemen, with Mr. Leonard Courtney as chairman and Sir William Wedderburn (who writes from Palace Chambers, Westminster), as one of the honorary secretaries. We have received a letter from this "Indian Famine Union," as it calls itself, in which it is explained that the investigation of the causes of famines and the promotion of all possible means of prevention are the chief aims. To this end it is sought, in the first instance, to start a special enquiry on the spot, conducted under the orders of the Government of India, and then apparently to subject their recommendations to the review of persons in this country who are best conversant with the subject matter—retired officers, civil and military engineers, business men, missionaries, etc. We think the object praiseworthy and sensible. Much depends on the special local enquiry. It must be conducted with the full co-operation and approval of the Government of India. There might possibly be some difficulties if the personnel should be entirely recruited from the ranks of the Indian services, because to a certain extent their ways and action may become subjects for criticism, and no subordinate could very well overhaul and question the existing regulations of the Local or Supreme Government. The civilians and others would be invaluable witnesses. If outsiders be enlisted to serve on this local enquiry, some of them will require to be paid, but this should prove no obstacle, for in any case there must obviously be some expenditure. But as the enquiry is apparently to be of a thoroughly independent character, with the view partly of satisfying the home conscience, we think the Chancellor of the Exchequer might fairly be asked to constitute measures for providing the money. The investigation (which is evidently designed on broad lines and does not trench on famine relief) might prove very instructive and useful.—(June 23.)

"DEMOCRACY."

There is the germ of a very useful movement in the Indian Famine Union, which was quietly introduced at the Westminster Palace Hotel last week. A group of well-known friends of India met, under the leadership of Mr. Leonard Courtney, for that purpose. Lord Ripon promises to join the Committee, and the Union is supported by Sir M. Bhownaggree, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. Romesh Dutt, Sir W. Wedderburn, Mr. W. S. Caine, and many other active and sympathetic Indian workers. A provisional committee was formed, of which Mr. Courtney accepted the presidentship, for the purpose of considering the steps to be taken as to launching the Union. In the motion of Lord Hobhouse it was stated that the new Union was to rest "on economic and philanthropic bases." Such a Union would be philanthropic in the best and only commendable sense of the word; but we have a misgiving as to the wisdom of inserting it. There can be no doubt what the gentlemen present understood by it; but it is a word that frightens off many of the most zealous progressists, and attracts a good-hearted, though not very far-seeing class. However, the conference made it clear that the Union is to proceed mainly on scientific lines. Its first task will be to study "the economic position of the Indian cultivator," and to seek economic remedies for India's chronic sores. That is a promising and attractive aim. But for the war this would be an admirable time to bring it home to the conscience of the nation. We wish the new Union a great and speedy success.—(June 15.)

THE "REVIEW OF THE WEEK."

We notice that an association has been formed in London entitled the "Indian Famine Union." Its declared object is "to investigate the economic causes of famine in India and to ascertain possible means of prevention," words which but have little real meaning from the lips of such men as Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, etc.—theorists and faddists every one; and among those who spoke at the preliminary meeting of the Union last week was a person whose words could carry any weight. We refer to Mr. S. S. Thorburn, the well-known Punjab civilian, now retired, and a great and recognised authority on Indian agricultural subjects. Having failed to hamper the Indian Government from within Parliament, an attempt is now to be made through this egregious Famine Union from outside. Nor is the attempt less insidious because it is concealed under a cloak of friendliness. The Indian Famine Union is a mischievous body, which may stir up much racial trouble in India and can do no possible good in the direction it proposes to move.—(June 14.)

[This is a somewhat incoherent paragraph. We reproduce it because it exhibits very well the absurdity of the only unfavourable criticism which the Famine Union has encountered.—Ed. INDIA.]

THE "OUTLOOK."

The Indian Famine Union starts with a good Committee, with a chairman, Mr. Courtney, who, as Sir George Birdwood slyly remarked, is famous for impartiality; and with Sir M. Bhownaggree, who dethroned Mr. Naoroji; Mr. Thorburn, who bearded the Viceroy in Simla; and Sir W. Wedderburn, the parent of the whole movement, as honorary secretaries. The objects of the Union are most praiseworthy. But the prospectus is vague, and an effort made at the preliminary meeting to render it more precise at once evidenced differences of opinion. These, however, were not serious, and the main point which requires to be cleared up is this: Does the Union, in pressing for a special enquiry into the causes of famine and the means of famine prevention, intend to ignore such enquiries as the Government, with its army of trained and disciplined servants, has made and is making, and are there to be separate enquiries upon all branches of the subject, which practically embraces the whole administration of India? If so, failure may be predicted. There is an enormous amount of information already upon record, and enquiries are busily proceeding wherever information is wanting. Will the association send out retired Indian civil servants to enquire at their own expense, or will it be dependent upon reports from unofficial agencies in India? The first alternative is unlikely; if the second be adopted, the information will all proceed from Congress critics of the Government. Indeed, while Mr. Naoroji sits upon the Committee it can hardly be looked upon as a non-party movement, and the "co-operation" with Government of which Sir W. Wedderburn's prospectus speaks will need to be made very manifest when a member of the Committee, late a member of Parliament, stands committed to a recent resolution that "Famines in India are due to the faithlessness of the British Government, to the injury alike of India and of England."—(June 22.)

THE "SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRONICLE."

Though little has been said lately in the general press on the condition of India, and the public mind, absorbed in South Africa and China, has almost forgotten the famine of a few months ago, the effects of that terrible visitation still remain. At the time when our schools were so nobly responding to the appeals from India's sorrowing children, we urged the necessity of a thorough investigation into the causes of these periodic famines, and demanded that our Government should give the thought and labour necessary for the perfect administration of our great dependency. We therefore welcome the formation of an Indian Famine Union to deal with the subject. The secretaries (one of whom is Mr. M. M. Bhownaggree, M.P.) explain that "the first point is to ascertain in detail the present condition of the Indian cultivator and the origin of his difficulties, and this can only be done by a special enquiry conducted under the orders of the Government of India. We therefore propose to begin our work by moving the Secretary of State to grant this special enquiry." It is to be hoped that the admirable aims of the Union will be fully realised. The expenditure of a few thousands and of a little labour now, may prevent the outlay of millions and the recurrence of the horrors of famine in days to come.—(June 20.)

THE "EMPIRE REVIEW."

Mr. J. D. Rees, C.I.E., writes in the July number of the "Empire Review":—For the purpose of dealing with the problem from this side, the Famine Union has been formed. The draft prospectus discloses no animus whatever against the Government, but a desire to learn the real causes of famines, and to co-operate with the Indian administration in devising means of prevention. It goes on to say that the first point is to ascertain in detail the present condition of the Indian cultivator, and the origin of his difficulties, which can only be done by a special enquiry conducted under the orders of the Government of India, to memorialise for the grant of which is the first step to be taken. Sub-committees are to be formed to report upon such suggested remedies as irrigation, agricultural banks, re-afforestation, administrative reform, village industries, migration, grain storage, export duties on grain, and technical education. But it is nowhere stated whether enquiries into these proposed remedies, which have been, and are being, held under the orders of the Indian Government, are to be presumed to be insufficient or insincere. Take the first three. The Viceroy's Government has ordered an enquiry throughout India with a view to discovering what further advances can be made in irrigation; it has pressed upon at least one local Government effectual action as regards agricultural banks, and has adopted to a great extent the results of an elaborate enquiry made in Madras under the orders of Lord Wenlock's Government; re-afforestation has received the fullest possible recogni-

tion compatible with the rights of cultivators, and if this matter needs further enquiry, then Sir Diedrich Brandis, the Bismarck of Indian Forestry, has lived in vain. The other matters have been dealt with to a greater or less extent, grain storage has been rejected, migration depends on the consent, hitherto refused, of those affected. Is it really suggested to urge upon the Government new enquiries covering the old ground, and in all cases to supplement such new enquiries in India by additional investigations and reports at home? If so, the Viceroy, who desires to keep the report-writing demon within bounds, will hardly welcome such co-operation. There is an immense amount of matter now on record concerning all these subjects, and as regards most of them enquiries are still proceeding. It may be hoped that a somewhat less comprehensive system of co-operation will be eventually evolved, so that "the special knowledge of retired officials, business men and missionaries who retain a kindly feeling towards India's people may be utilised," without duplication of enquiry, overlapping of programmes, and waste of time, trouble and tissue. One more word on this subject. At the initial gathering of the Union, Mr. Naoroji proposed "that recognising the energy and ability with which, under the direction of the Viceroy, the famine relief operations have been conducted, this meeting desires to co-operate with the Government in its efforts to deal with this great national calamity." And apparently the meeting agreed with the late Member of Parliament, since the resolution was unanimously adopted. Yet not long before Mr. Naoroji was in the chair at the Radical Club of North Camberwell, when a resolution was passed to the effect that the sufferings of the distressed Indian cultivator are due to the faithlessness of the British Government, to the injury alike of India and of England. These are mutually destructive resolutions, and while it is most satisfactory that Mr. Naoroji has experienced so sudden and complete a conversion it will need all Sir William Wedderburn's suavity, courtesy, and sincerity to preserve for this Union the non-party spirit he claims for it, unless it is made very clear that such resolutions as that of North Camberwell belong to an abandoned past. If that be clear, and the temperate and reasonable spirit which prevailed at the meeting be maintained, there is no reason why Sir William should not succeed in turning to good account the energies of those retired, but unexhausted, Anglo-Indians, who far away in England still hear the East calling.

MR. ROMESH DUTT ON INDIAN FAMINES.

ADDRESS TO THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

On Friday last, June 28, Mr. Romesh Dutt, C.I.E., delivered an address to the Fabian Society at Clifford's Inn, Fleet Street, London, upon "The Causes and Remedies of Indian Famines."

Mr. Dutt said that the occurrence of frequent and wide-spread famines in India in recent years was perhaps the strangest, as it was the saddest, phenomenon in modern times. India was under a civilised administration; the Indian Civil Service was an able and experienced body of administrators; the Indian people were frugal and industrious; the land was rich and fertile; the country had enjoyed uninterrupted internal peace for nearly half a century. They had all the causes which led to wealth and prosperity in other lands, and yet they were so resourceless and impoverished that every year of drought led to a famine, and deaths from each famine were reckoned not by thousands, but by hundreds of thousands, and sometimes by millions. The economic causes of this strange phenomenon were simple and obvious. The present system of administration, without popular representation, had failed to safeguard the interests of the people. All the sources of national wealth had been narrowed. Agriculture, manufactures, and a sound finance were the sources of wealth in all countries. Let them examine how these sources had been affected by the present system of administration.

Agriculture and the Land Tax.

He would begin the enquiry with agriculture and the land tax in India. Four-fifths of the population of India depended at the present day on agriculture for subsistence. Prima facie, if the land were lightly assessed, the people would be prosperous. If the land was over-assessed, the people would be reduced to a chronic state of poverty. The land tax therefore was a far more important question in India than in other countries, where the people were less dependent on agriculture. The system of imposing the land tax varied in the different provinces of India. He would not trouble them with all those details. He asked them only to remember the broad distinction that, generally speaking, the land tax or land revenue was paid to the State by landlords in Northern India, while in Southern India it was paid directly by the cultivators of the soil. There were large exceptions to this general rule, but it would be enough for their purpose that night to remember this general rule. The early British administrators made the fatal mistake in Southern India, as they did in other parts of India, of fixing an impossible land tax, and collecting it with a rigorous severity unknown in India before. In Madras the demand was actually fixed at 45 per cent. of the produce of the soil. In other words if a cultivator produced crops worth £10 a year—and this was a liberal estimate for an Indian cultivator—the Government demanded £4 10s. as its revenue, leaving only £5 10s. to the cultivator to support himself and his family for 12 months, and to pay for his ploughs and bullocks, his farm labour and seed grain. This naturally caused a great deal of misery and oppression, and the accounts to be found in the earlier records were deplorable. [Some extracts from the records of 1818 were read.] This was the state of things in Southern India in the early days of British rule. He need hardly say that much improvement had been effected within the last 80 years. But more improvement was needed. The land tax had been reduced from 45 per cent. to a maximum of 33 per cent, but even this was a ruinous rate, for a cultivator could not afford to pay £3 7s. to the State out of £10 of his gross produce. The settlements were made now for long periods, generally once in thirty years, but at each recurring settlement there was a revision of the land tax which prevented land improvements and paralysed agriculture. Many English administrators had recommended within the last century that the State-demand should be fixed in some way in order to give the people a motive for improvements and a chance of saving. The last of these recommendations was from Lord Ripon, who proposed in 1883 that the State demand should not be increased except when there was a rise in prices of crops. All these recommendations had been disregarded. At each recurring settlement the land revenue was raised; the cultivator of Southern India did not understand on what grounds it was raised; he was not permitted to appeal to courts of justice against such enhancements made by revenue officers; and thus the strongest motive for agricultural improvements and savings was wanting. Turning now to Northern India, there the land revenue was generally paid by landlords—not by the actual cultivators. In some parts of India, as in Bengal, the land-revenue had been permanently fixed, once for all, and the profits from all land improvements remained with the people. And it was remarkable that in permanently settled Bengal there had been no famine, involving loss of life, for over a hundred years, showing the beneficial effects of the permanent settlement. Other parts of Northern India had not been so fortunate. In the valley of the Jumna and the Ganges a permanent settlement was promised. The Marquess of Wellesley passed two regulations, in 1803 and in 1805, in which he unreservedly gave a pledge to the people to make a permanent settlement. His successor, Lord Minto, pressed the Directors of the East India Company to redeem this pledge. Nevertheless, the Directors of the East India Company violated the pledge, and a permanent settlement of the land revenue was not concluded in Northern India. The company was abolished in 1858. Three years after, Lord Canning, the first Viceroy of India under the Crown, again pressed for permanently settling the land revenues of India. Lord Lawrence, another distinguished Viceroy and able statesman, supported this proposal. Two Secretaries of State, Sir Charles Wood, a Liberal, and Sir Stafford Northcote, a Conservative, recommended this measure. Nevertheless the proposal was finally rejected in England in 1883. In the absence of a permanent settlement of the land revenue, the State demand had varied from time to time in most parts of Northern India. The early British administrators fixed it as high as they could—they demanded from landlords three-fourths of their rental as the Government revenue. If a landlord's rental was £1,200, the East India Company demanded £900 out of it as the land tax. This was found an oppressive and impossible rate. In 1833 the land tax was reduced to two-thirds; and in 1855 to one-half of the rental. In other words the landlord with a rental of £1,200 now paid to the Government £600 as the land tax. But this was not all. A new settlement was made every twenty or thirty years. In these recurring settlements the landlord's rental was ascertained after fresh enquiries. The land revenue demanded was not half the actual rental, but half the prospective rental. And to this a great many taxes were added, all imposed on this prospective rental. Such was the state of things now in India. It was clear that agriculture could not flourish under such a system. There was no adequate motive for land improvements or for savings, unless there was some fixity in the Government demand. What was wanted was, (1) some clear fixed rules limiting within moderate limits the liabilities of the cultivator in Southern India, and of the landlord in Northern India; and (2) some independent courts of justice to which the taxpayer could appeal if these rules were violated or misinterpreted by the revenue officers. The agricultural population of India demanded such security and justice under British rule.

Indian Manufactures.

The question of agriculture was the most important question in India. The history of Indian manufactures was equally sad. The policy of the East India Company, from the commencement of their rule, was to discourage Indian manufactures for the benefit of British manufacturers. The Company became the administrators of Bengal in 1765. Four years later they issued an order that the manufacture of silk fabrics should be discouraged in Bengal, that the people should produce raw silk in India to be woven in England, that Indian silk-winders should be made to work in the company's factories and prohibited from working outside, "under severe penalties, by the authority of the Government." The effect of this mandate, according to the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1783, was "to change the whole face of that industrious country, in order to render it a field for the produce of crude materials subservient to the manufacturers of Great Britain." This Report of the Select Committee was submitted in 1783. Let them pass over a period of thirty years to 1813, when the East India Company's charter was renewed. An enquiry was made, as usual, before the renewal of the Charter. Eminent witnesses like Warren Hastings of Bengal, Thomas Munro of Madras, and Sir John Malcolm of Bombay, were examined. They were asked by the House of Commons, not how Indian manufactures could be encouraged, but how they could be discouraged to make room for British manufactures. For it was found that even up to that date Indian silk and cotton goods could be sold in England at a price from 50 to 60 per cent. lower than those produced in England. What was the policy which England pursued? She imposed a prohibi-

tive duty which killed the Indian manufactures. The following statement was made by Joseph Ranking before the House of Commons during their enquiry of 1813:—

"Can you state what is the 'ad valorem' duty on piece goods sold at the East India House?

"The duty on the class called Calicoes is £3 6s. 8d. per cent. upon importation; and if they are used for home consumption, there is a further duty of £68 6s. 8d. per cent.

"There is another class called Muslins, on which the duty on importation is 10 per cent.; and if they are used for home consumption, of £27 6s. 8d. per cent.

"There is a third class, coloured goods, which are prohibited from being used in this country, upon which there is a duty upon importation of £3 6s. 8d. per cent.; they are only for exportation.

"This Session of Parliament there has been a new duty of 20 per cent. on the consolidated duties, which will make the duties of Calicoes . . . . for home consumption £78 6s. 8d. per cent., upon Muslins for home consumption £31 6s. 8d."

This finally killed the Indian weaving manufacture. Henry St. George Tucker, himself a Director of the East India Company, wrote in 1823:—"India is thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing to that of an agricultural country."

[Extracts from Tucker's memorandum dated 1823 were here read.]

Railways and Irrigation.

The prohibitive duties had now been abolished after they had done their fatal work. Other changes had also taken place in India. About the middle of the 19th century railways were introduced in India. Railways were beneficial everywhere in the world by shortening distances, and making journeys cheaper, quicker, and easier. But in India, unfortunately, railways had been constructed by the Government out of the public revenues, or by private companies under guarantee of profit out of the public revenues, and the economic effect of this had not been beneficial. It had been a financial loss to Indians. After deducting all earnings they had paid more than fifty millions sterling out of the revenues to cover the loss, and the annual loss still continued. Capitalists and speculators and manufacturers in this country, who had votes, were putting continual pressure on the Government of India for the construction of more lines with guarantee of profits from the Indian revenues. Indians who had no votes were unable to resist this pressure, and railways had been overdone. The Famine Commission of 1898 reported that all lines required for famine protective purposes had been done, but still more lines were being constructed which the people did not want, and which the people were made to pay for. On the other hand irrigation works which were needed by the people for the protection of their crops were neglected. Over 250 millions sterling had been spent on railways, and not 50 millions on irrigation up to date. Yet out of 220 million acres of cultivated land in India, only 20 millions or less than one-tenth the area, were protected by irrigation works. The people of India had struggled against every adverse circumstance, and within the last half century had endeavoured to revive their manufacture by adopting European methods, and by the help of steam and machinery. Cotton mills had been started in Bombay and in Bengal, and the products of these mills had some sale in India and out of India. No Royal Commission or Committee of the House of Commons sat to help and promote this infant enterprise; if any Government had instituted an enquiry with this avowed purpose, it was likely that British voters would have turned it out of office within a twelve-month. As it was, Lancashire voters forced the Indian Government to pass tariff rules which no national Government, responsible for the good of the people under its administration, would have passed. A small import duty used to be imposed in India on piece goods and other articles, not for the purposes of protection, but merely as a source of revenue much needed. To this the Lancashire manufacturers objected, and the Indian Government was compelled to surrender this source of revenue in 1882. But the revenue so surrendered could not be replaced; the Indian Government was in a bad way, and wished to re-impose it. A sort of compromise was then effected which was a striking illustration of how India was ruled under the dictation of British manufacturers. An import duty was re-imposed on British piece goods, and this was accompanied by a similar duty imposed on goods manufactured in India to satisfy the British manufacturers. Under the imposition of this strange duty—without parallel in any other country in the civilised world—the Indian mills which were struggling for existence had greatly declined within the last decade, especially in competition, with Japan which imposed no such duty on its own products.

Financial Administration.

He now turned to the financial administration of India. The entire financial policy of England in respect of India from the 18th century to the present day was to charge to India everything which could rightly, or even wrongly, be charged to that unrepresented country. England had spent hundreds of millions in acquiring and defending her colonies all over the earth. For acquiring and defending the Empire of India she had not paid a shilling. On the contrary, during the rule of the East India Company, India paid an annual tribute to England reckoned in millions. When the company was abolished, the cost of the transfer of the Indian Empire to the Crown was charged to India. Since then they had made India pay for wars in China, Afghanistan, Persia, and the Soudan. They maintained a vast army in India, mainly for imperial purposes, at the cost of the people of India. They had virtually excluded the people of India from nearly all high offices in their own country in order to find a career for English boys in India. A Parliamentary Return was submitted nine years ago, showing all salaries and pensions of a thousand rupees and upwards paid by India. Taking Rs. 10 for a pound sterling, the total came to fourteen millions sterling to Englishmen annually, and only 3¼ millions to the Natives of India. Such had been the financial policy of England towards an unrepresented country. The result was that public debt had increased by leaps and bounds in India in a time of profound peace. The public debt, taking ten rupees for a pound, was 118 millions sterling in 1875; in 1895 it was 220 millions. In other words while the public debt was steadily decreased in England, mainly under Mr. Gladstone's influence, it nearly doubled in India within 20 years of profound peace. England paid for the Colonial Office, located in Whitehall. India paid for the India Office located in a part of the same buildings. In payment of the expenses of that office, and of various other liabilities, India had to make a constantly increasing annual remittance to England. As India had little manufacture and little trade, virtually the whole pressure fell on the produce of the soil—on the food of the people. Thus India was forced to export far more than she imported, and this excess was increasing at a startling rate. He compiled the following figures from a paper which an official of the India Office read before the Society of Arts in March last:—

Annual Excess of Exports over Imports.

From		£
1859 to 1863	- - -	2 millions
1864 to 1868	- - -	8 ,,
1869 to 1873	- - -	16 ,,
1874 to 1878	- - -	15 ,,
1879 to 1883	- - -	19 ,,
1884 to 1888	- - -	15 ,,
1889 to 1893	- - -	20 ,,
1894 to 1898	- - -	25 ,,

The significance of the above figures would be better understood by comparing them with the total revenues of India. The Royal Commission on Indian expenditure in their recently published Report found the net revenues of India to be 57 millions sterling. A sum, therefore, nearly equal to one half of the public revenues of India was annually remitted out of India without a direct equivalent. A sum representing the food of twenty-five millions of the people of India was annually remitted to England without a direct return. Was it possible that under this financial arrangement India could be other than impoverished and famine-stricken? If any of the prosperous countries of the world—America or England, France or Germany—had been subjected to such conditions, would not that country have been reduced to poverty, and visited by famines, within a few decades?

Conclusion.

He must now conclude. It was necessary to remember that there was no great economic effect without an economic cause. The famines in India were directly caused by the failure of rains in particular tracts, but the rains never failed over the whole of India, and there had never been a year when the total food supply of India was insufficient for the total population of India. What caused distress and deaths was that the people had been so hopelessly impoverished that they could not buy when the crops failed in any particular locality. Let them remove the economic causes of the nation's poverty and they removed the causes of famines. In the first place they should moderate the land tax and give it some equitable limits which would be understood by the people. In the second place they should discontinue the construction of railways out of public revenues, or under guarantee of profits from public revenues, and extend irrigation works. In the third place they should encourage the industries of India, as the Government of a country ought to do, and thus multiply and add to the resources of the people. In the fourth place they should follow a just and equitable financial policy towards India, as in the case of British colonies, relieve India from unfair charges, reduce her public debt, and reduce that annual drain which was impoverishing the nation. Lastly they should have some trust and confidence in the people, and admit them to some share in the control of the administration, for it was not in human nature that they should be able to safeguard the interests of another people without allowing them some voice in their own concerns. In the words of one of England's greatest philosophers and economists, John Stuart Mill, "The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not and cannot exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle farm to be worked for the profit of its own inhabitants." England did not wish to maintain India as a "human cattle farm," and the only way in which England could improve the condition and promote the prosperity of India was the method she had so successfully followed in all her colonies—namely, giving the people themselves some real share in the administration of their own concerns. (Applause.)

The address, which took an hour to deliver, was listened to with the greatest interest, and frequently interrupted by cheers.

At its conclusion, numerous questions were asked, which afforded Mr. Dutt an opportunity to repeat, illustrate, and amplify his remarks. Several speakers, including Mr. Pearsall, Mr. Bland, Captain St. John, and Captain Rolleston then spoke, and were followed by the Chairman, Mr. Macrosty. Mr. Romesh Dutt replied to their observations, and the meeting, which began at 8 p.m., concluded after 10 p.m., with the usual vote of thanks to the lecturer.

Mr. Dutt has received the following letter from a well-known

English lady who was present at the meeting. Names are omitted:—

"I was born in Calcutta; my father was born in Calcutta; . . . . my father's father was one of the early pioneers, so to say, of India. . . . . My mother's father . . . . was Chief Justice of Bengal, so that not only I, but many of my relations have been clothed, fed, and educated by the money of these poor rayats. For my father . . . . had four brothers in the Civil Service, and in this generation my brother . . . . has just lately returned from being Commissioner of . . . . Indeed, sir, you can scarcely feel more deeply than I do the sorrows of India. . . . . Can nothing, nothing be done? . . . . What a load of guilt Christian England is accumulating in the meantime! I could not help sending you this little line to express to you my deep appreciation of your admirably clear and exhaustive and deeply interesting lecture: I should like it to have been six times as long."

Imperial Parliament.

Tuesday, June 11.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PROPOSED ARCHBISHOP FOR INDIA.

Mr. H. D. Greene asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the answer given by him on the 3rd of August, 1899, he could now state whether, having regard to the importance of his Majesty's Indian Empire, and to the fact that certain bishops of the Church of England in the Colonies had recently adopted and assumed the style of archbishop, his Majesty's Government would take steps by amending the statutes affecting the Church of England in the East Indies, or otherwise legally to confer on the Bishop of Calcutta as statutory Metropolitan Bishop in India the style and precedence of an archbishop.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am well aware of the nature of the position of the Bishop of Calcutta, as the Metropolitan of India, and the suggestion contained in the hon. member's question has reached me from various quarters. But there are so many important considerations involved that I cannot in advance give any definite pledge on the subject.

Monday, June 17.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITION.

Singh, Magan,—Petition of Magan Singh, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

BILLS AND TRANSFERS.

Sir Edward Sassoon asked the Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that the difference of a sixteenth of a penny ordinarily made by the India Council between the sale of bills and telegraphic transfers represents a charge of nine and a half per cent. per annum: And, whether, in view of this impost upon banking and commercial transactions, he would give instructions for reducing the difference by one moiety, except on occasions when conditions of financial stringency prevail in India.

Lord G. Hamilton: The difference of a sixteenth of a penny per rupee between the price of bills on India and that of telegraphic transfers represents a charge of 9½ per cent. per annum if it can be assumed that all such bills, whether drawn on Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, can be presented in fifteen days; but this is not the case. To give the telegraphic transfers at only 1-32nd of a penny more than the bills would, with the present rates of discount, be, in effect, to lend the money at cheaper rates than that at which the Presidency banks are lending it.

Tuesday, June 18.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE MANUFACTURERS' REVOLT.

Sir Charles Cayzer asked the Secretary of State for India, in view of the fact that wheels and axles and other material for the use of the Indian State or Guaranteed Railways had been ordered from Messrs. Krupp and Co., Essen, and shipped at Hamburg for Calcutta by foreign vessels, and that tenders for railway waggons had been ordered in Austria and shipped at Trieste for Calcutta by foreign vessel, whether he could state the quantity in tons and value so ordered: And, whether he would grant a Return showing the quantity in tons and value of all the railway material for the Indian State and Guaranteed Railways, and whether purchased at home or abroad, and shipped in British or foreign vessels, for the last five years 1896 to 1900, inclusive, if moved for.

Lord G. Hamilton: I understand that one of the Indian railway companies has recently ordered 31 locomotive tenders from Messrs. Krupp, and 50 goods brake vans from a Hungarian firm, the total value of the two orders being £26,666. I cannot give the weight in tons. As regards the second question, I can at once furnish my hon. friend with the information he wants so far as State railways are concerned.

Thursday, June 20.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Loans raised in India),—Copy presented,—of Return of all Loans raised in India, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ended on the 31st March 1901, etc. (by Act); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 217.)

DR. WELLDON AS ARCHBISHOP!
A PROVOCATIVE PROPOSAL.

Mr. Caine asked the Secretary of State for India if it was intended to confer on the Bishop of Calcutta the style and precedence of Archbishop; and, if so, could this step be taken without the sanction of this House being obtained by legislation or otherwise, and would the change be carried out without adding to the expenditure of the Indian Empire.

Lord G. Hamilton: I cannot make any statement at present on the subject to which the hon. Member's question refers. As I said a few days ago in reply to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, there are many important considerations involved in this proposal; but I believe I may state at once that, if the change of title were made, no extra charge would thereby be thrown upon the revenues of India.

BOERS AT AHMEDNAGAR.

Mr. William Redmond asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to the latest report of the Army Medical Department, which stated of Ahmednagar that the general health was bad during the greater part of the year, that plague was epidemic from July to December, and enteric fever was most prevalent in May, June, and July: And, seeing that the principal medical officer stated that the sanitary conditions were bad, the barrack accommodation and the conservancy establishment insufficient, and the water supply unsatisfactory, whether he would recommend the removal of the Boer prisoners to a more healthy locality.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have already stated in the House that there is no intention of removing the Boer prisoners. The report quoted by the hon. Member for Clare mainly refers to the cantonment where British troops were located during the year 1899, which was exceptionally unhealthy owing to causes which have now ceased to exist: and the defects mentioned by the principal medical officer have been remedied. As I have said before the station is considered to be one of the healthiest and most agreeable in India. The prisoners' camp was recently visited by the Governor of Bombay who reported that the prisoners appeared "to be thoroughly contented and well cared for."

Friday, June 21.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BOERS AT AHMEDNAGAR.

Mr. Channing asked the Secretary of State for India whether the fort within which the Boer prisoners were kept at Ahmednagar was surrounded by a high walled embankment which shuts out every breeze: Whether the huts were roofed with corrugated iron, and the temperature noted at midnight inside the huts was several times over 100, and at times as much as 108 during the month of May: And, whether steps could and would be taken to remove the Boer prisoners to a more healthy position.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have already stated that there is no intention of removing the Boer prisoners. I have no information as to the details referred to in the hon. Member's question; but, as I stated yesterday in answer to the question of the hon. Member for East Clare, the station is considered to be one of the healthiest and most agreeable in India.

Mr. Channing: Will the noble lord make enquiries as to the accuracy of the statements I have laid before him?

Lord G. Hamilton: No, I will not make any enquiries. (Cheers.) The Governor of Bombay has visited the place, and he found the prisoners perfectly well satisfied. The attacks made in this country on the salubrity of Ahmednagar are received with universal ridicule throughout India. (Cheers.)

Mr. Channing gave notice that he would call attention to the subject on the first opportunity.

Mr. W. Redmond: May I ask the noble lord whether it is not absolutely the fact that the Army Medical Department has declared this place last year or the year before to be the most unhealthy station in India?

The Speaker: Order, Order. That question was answered yesterday.

THE TIBET PROGRAMME.
THE "FORWARD" SCHOOL AT WORK AGAIN.

Mr. Norman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been called to the Embassy from the Dalai Lama of Tibet to his Majesty the Emperor of Russia, with the alleged object of soliciting the protection of Russia against British encroachments; and whether his Majesty's Government had made, or proposed to make, any communication to the Russian Government upon this subject.

Viscount Cranborne: It has been recently reported in the Russian Press that a special mission from Tibet, consisting of seven persons, headed by the Lama Daroshiyeff, was on its way to St. Petersburg, but his Majesty's Government have received no confirmation of this statement.

Monday, June 24.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

FURTHER DELAY OF TWO OR THREE WEEKS.

Sir John Leng asked the Secretary of State for India whether he could say when the usual explanatory Memorandum on Indian Finance would probably be issued.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Explanatory Memorandum on Indian Finance is in the hands of the printers, but some of the information has only just been received from India. I hope that it will be ready for delivery to Members in two or three weeks.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF LASCARS.

Mr. William Redmond asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been called to the judgment of Mr. Justice Mathews, in the King's Bench, to the effect that under the Merchant Shipping Act Lascars and Europeans must be treated alike with regard to the crew space: And, whether the Board of Trade intended to take any action in this matter.

Mr. Gerald Balfour: Yes, sir, my attention has been called to the judgment to which the hon. member refers, but leave has been given to appeal, and in these circumstances I am not prepared to make any statement in the matter at the present moment.

LIGHTS IN THE RED SEA.

Sir James Fergusson asked the Secretary of State for War whether his Majesty's Government were aware of the cause of the delay in the commencement by the Turkish Government of the construction of four new lights at the southern end of the Red Sea, whether the light dues surrendered by the Egyptian Government for this purpose and accumulated for the last ten years could be made available if a want of funds in the Ottoman Treasury was the reason for the continued danger to navigation caused by the absence of these lights: Whether his Majesty's Government were using their best influence to procure the fulfilment of an undertaking entered into more than two years ago: What had occurred to delay the erection of a light on the Island of Socotra for which the Under-Secretary of State for War in 1899 stated that the Government of India had been requested to prepare plans, taking into consideration the fact that the erection of this light has been regarded as important for many years, and that a shipwreck occurred in 1897 for want of it.

Viscount Cranborne: His Majesty's Government are informed that the construction of the four lights in the Red Sea will be commenced early in November. The lighting apparatus is being constructed, and will be ready in September. In regard to the light on Socotra, the Government of Bombay was unable to submit plans and estimates in a complete form until the end of last year. These are now under the consideration of the Trinity House and the Board of Trade.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF LASCARS.

On the report of the vote, passed in Committee of Supply on June 7, of £571,085 for the expenses of the Post Office Packet Service,

Mr. O'Mara drew attention to the insufficient accommodation for lascars employed on board the P. and O. steamers.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain replied that the P. and O. steamers carried the mails under a contract with the conditions of which the Postmaster-General had no power to interfere. That contract would run until 1905, when, no doubt, the question of the lascars would be considered.

Mr. W. Redmond asked the Secretary of the Treasury what the Government intended to do with regard to the subsidy to the P. and O. Company. Only two or three days ago a judgment was given in the King's Bench declaring that Lascar seamen were entitled to the same cubic space as European sailors. If an appeal by the company were not successful, according to the Secretary of the Treasury, the matter would not be considered until the conclusion of the contract in 1905. That, he contended, was not reasonable. It would be a perfectly intolerable state of affairs if the subsidy were continued, although the company neglected to carry out the law.

Mr. Dillon said the judgment in the King's Bench was only the last act in a grave public scandal. In spite of continual protests in the House, this company had again and again succeeded in obtaining this enormous subsidy.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain said that, as he had already stated, the Post Office had no power to determine the subsidy before 1905. What action was taken must be taken by the Board of Trade as part of their ordinary duties.

Mr. Dillon said he would raise the question again on the vote for the Board of Trade.

London Indian Society.—The Sessional meeting of the London Indian Society was held at 85, Palace Chambers on Saturday last. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji presided. The Sessional report was read by Mr. Hira L. Ahuja (hon. sec.) and was unanimously adopted. Entire satisfaction was expressed with the work done by the hon. secretaries and the treasurer. For the ensuing Session (October-February), Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji was re-elected president, Mr. Hira Lal Ahuja (from the Punjab) vice-president, Mr. N. B. Wagle (from Bombay), and Mr. Kawar Harnam Singh (from the Punjab) hon. joint secretaries; and Mr. G. K. Gadgil (from Bombay) hon. treasurer. A vote of thanks was passed to the retiring officers.

BRITISH INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The "Manchester Guardian" writes (June 17):—While more or less powerful influences are at work to secure the rights of the white population and the Native races in South Africa at the close of the war, there is perhaps some danger that the claims of an intermediate class may be overlooked. Before the war began the position of British Indians, especially in the Transvaal and in Natal, had been for a long time the subject of correspondence with the Colonial Office and of remonstrance from the Colonial Office to the Governments concerned. There was no lack of goodwill on the part of the Colonial Office. But in dealing with the Transvaal it was hampered by legislation to which it had assented, and in dealing with Natal it was hampered by the claim of a self-governing colony to control its own affairs. Soon after the war began Lord Lansdowne said that nothing in the conduct of the Transvaal Government had excited his indignation more than the treatment they meted out to British Indians. Lord Lansdowne apparently forgot that this treatment was in accordance with law accepted by our Government, who had allowed the rights of British Indians under the Convention of London to be frittered away, and whose belated intervention was rendered nugatory by the unfavourable finding of an arbitrator. Nevertheless Lord Lansdowne's remarks inspired a hope that with the annexation of the Republics the grievances of the Indians would disappear, especially as Mr. Chamberlain had urged the Transvaal Government, "in the interests of its own burghers, to treat the Indians more generously and to free itself from even the appearance of countenancing a trade jealousy." So far, however, the hope has been miserably disappointed. The Indians are worse off than they were before the war. There is a preliminary difficulty about the return of the refugees to the Transvaal. On this point the facts are not wholly clear, but the truth appears to be, as Lord Milner telegraphed to Mr. Chamberlain a month ago, that "civil permits" are granted on the condition that the recipients join the Rand Rifles, and "this does not seem advisable in the case of Indians." Meantime those Indians who stayed in the Transvaal find that the anti-Indian regulations not only remain but are enforced with a strictness hitherto unknown. The regulations are numerous, harassing, and humiliating. Under the laws of the Orange Free State Asiatics are debarred from remaining for more than two months without permission from the State President. They may not own landed property or carry on trade or farming. When they receive permission to reside they become subject to a poll-tax of 10s. a year. In the Transvaal an Indian has to take out a registration ticket at a cost of £3. He may not travel by rail in a first-class or a second-class carriage. He may not own native gold or take out a digging licence. In Pretoria he is prevented by by-law from using the footpaths or public vehicles. But the chief grievance is that the Government may "point out to the Indians, for sanitary purposes, certain locations for habitation." The point of the Indian complaints now is that, while this regulation and others were rather a dead letter under Mr. Kruger's Government in the case at least of respectable Indians, under the present military rule "every anti-Indian ordinance is being unearthed and with strict British regularity applied to the victims."

It is to be assumed, in view of Mr. Chamberlain's representations to Mr. Kruger, that this state of affairs is merely temporary. But Indians note with alarm that while before the war the goal of British policy was said to be "equal rights for all the civilised races in South Africa," it is now described as "equal rights for all the white races." The later term seems to recognise the colour line to which British Indians in the colonies owe their disabilities. Peculiar importance attaches to the policy pursued in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, because there the Colonial Office has the matter in its hands and will set an example, good or bad, to all the colonies. How sorely a good example is needed may be gathered from a White Paper issued from the Colonial Office last December "showing, in the case of every British colony and dependency the population of which includes British Indians, what disabilities or restrictions are imposed upon such British Indians." It would be hard to conceive a more complete exposure of the pretences of "Imperialism." In the United Kingdom and in India the British Indian enjoys unimpaired the rights of a subject of the British Crown. In the colonies he is a "coolie." He may become a member of the British House of Commons; but in Natal, unless he is furnished with a pass, he has no remedy in damages if he is arrested under the belief that he is a deserting servant. The White Paper consists of sixty-seven pages, twenty-eight of which are taken up with the disabilities of British Indians in Natal, lately defended by a force that Indian taxpayers had maintained. An Indian in Natal may distinguish himself as a stretcher-bearer—the story of his mute and patient heroism in the bloody battles on the Tugela will never be fully told—but he may not remove cattle from place to place without a permit. If he takes service without registration he is liable to a fine of £2, with an alternative of imprisonment. He is subject to by-laws for the punishment of coloured persons going about after dark without being able to give a good account of themselves. He is often debarred from trading by an ingenious regulation which requires that suitable books shall be kept in the English language. Save by a special order from the Governor in Council, he has no Parliamentary franchise, because India does not possess elective institutions founded on the Parliamentary franchise; and, not being entitled to the franchise, he is disqualified from serving as a juror. The problem raised by these and other paradoxes of "Imperialism" is no doubt difficult and intricate. But much depends upon the course which may be taken by Mr. Chamberlain in the two new South African colonies.

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